

ABC THIS WEEK WITH DAVID BRINKLEY
28 October 1984

NICARAGUA/CIA>BRINKLEY: It may seem that none of the fighters in <
>MANUAL>Central America on either side, any side, need any instruction on how to commit murder. They have, after all, been committing murder in more or less wholesale numbers for years. Nevertheless, the law says that the CIA or any other agency of the U.S. government may not commit, encourage or support assassination for any reason, even among fighters who, whatever we do or say, are going to assassinate their enemies anyway. Before we question today's guests about this, here's some background on a messy, ugly scene from John Martin. John?

MARTIN: This is the cover of the psychological warfare training manual, David. When it surfaced here in Washington 13 days ago, it raised the possibility that the CIA had been training rebels to assassinate Sandinista officials in Nicaragua. If so, it would violate the president's own executive order, but it would reopen some of the deepest wounds suffered by American intelligence agencies nearly 10 years ago. At the Nicaraguan embassy here in Washington this past week, the Sandinista government announced a formal protest. The ranking diplomat, Manuel Cordero accused the United States of complicity in some 1,200 kidnappings and 854 assassinations in Nicaragua in the last three years.

MARTIN: What evidence do you have that they were killed by Contras or by the CIA or by anybody outside their own circle? MANUEL CORDERO (Nicaraguan minister-counselor): Because of witnesses that have testified because of the situation and the report by the army when these things have taken place, people have witnessed that, and the Contras themselves have announced that through the radio station.

MARTIN: The Sandinistas say they took these pictures of children shot to death in March in an area called Rio San Juan and of farm families murdered in May in a cooperative called *Palo de Archo. But there are no death certificates and no witnesses available to ABC News. Some civilians die in combat. That is how the embassy said these Sandinista youths were killed 18 months ago.

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Scholars and journalists studying Nicaragua say they are
skeptical of the assassination figures. The State
Department called them ridiculous. Even so, the Contras
claim responsibility for some assassinations. A Jesuit
economist says he knew this couple, government officials,
who were kidnapped and killed by a Contra, who later
confessed. REV. XABIER GOROSTIAGA (former government
planner): And he says, 'Yes, I killed them, I killed them
because they were Sandinistas, because they were
irreducible (sic) persons. I was trained by the CIA.'
And he gives us the name of the CIA trainer. 2.

MARTIN: A former CIA analyst says he visited Nicaragua
last month and examined records that he said documented
about 65 murders of Sandinista election officials, one, a
peasant on a local voting board. DAVID MacMICHAEL (former
CIA analyst): The door of his house was broken down, a
group of Contras came in, dragged him outside in front of
his eight-month pregnant wife, six children, castrated
him, cut off his ears and then shot him to death.

MARTIN: American CIA officials declined requests for
interviews. But Edgar *Chomorro of the Nicaraguan
Democratic Force said the American who helped him draft
the training manual emphasized the need to control the
minds of potential supporters. The document does not use
the word 'assassination,' but calls for kidnappings in
efforts to neutralize Sandinista officials.

SEN. MALCOLM WALLOP (R-Wyo., Senate Intelligence
Committee): What neutralize means to me is basically to
reduce the effectiveness of it. There's all kinds of ways
of eliminating effectiveness without eliminating life.

MARTIN: This week, the Senate Intelligence Committee got
a closed briefing from CIA officials, who could not say
who ordered or reviewed the training manual.

SEN. PATRICK LEAHY (D-Vt. Senate Intelligence Committee):
Why is everybody scrambling around saying, 'Well, gee, I
don't know who authorized it. Did you authorize it?
Well, I didn't, maybe it's the guy down the hall. Check
with the guy down the hall and he says, 'No, I was gone
that day, it must have been somebody else that did it.'
After awhile you wonder who's running the show.

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN (Oct. 21, Kansas City, Missouri):
We're not in the habit of assigning guilt before there has
been proper evidence produced and proof of that guilt.
But if guilt is established, whoever is guilty, we will
treat with that situation then, and they will be removed.

MARTIN: A Senate committee reported in 1975 that CIA
officials ordered agents to kill African Premier Patrice
*Lumumba of the Congo in 1960, but that his rivals
murdered him a year later, that CIA officials tried but
failed to have Cuban Premier Fidel Castro killed by

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gangsters in exiles between 1960 and 1965. Later, in Vietnam, the CIA participated in a program with other intelligence and military units which killed some 20,000 Viet Cong officials and agents, mostly in combat, according to William Colby, who helped run the program and later became CIA director. Mr. Colby was a witness before the Senate committee which spent 15 months investigating CIA operations. Both presidents Ford and Reagan issued rules prohibiting anyone working for the United States from carrying out or planning assassinations. The Reagan administration has denounced murder as a tool in Nicaragua or elsewhere. But the episode of the training manual has shaken bipartisan support and raised questions in Congress. SEN. SAM NUNN (D-Ga., Senate Intelligence Committee): I remember very well the discussion in the 1970's about the intelligence agency being like a rogue elephant. And, later, it turns out, after thorough review, the agencies properly or, in some cases, improperly were acting with the knowledge of presidents of the United States.

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MARTIN: Late this week, the Senate's select committee on intelligence meets again in secret here at the Capitol. It will call more witnesses to try to find out whether the manual was or was not an invitation to murder. And, if it was, whether the blame lies with the men in the field, the managers at headquarters or somebody else. David?

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AB06>NICARAGUA/CIA>BRINKLEY: Adm. Turner, Mr. Colby, thanks very much for < >MANUAL 2>coming in. Here with us are George Will of ABC News, and Sam Donaldson, ABC News White House correspondent. As you both know, as we all know in the middle 70's the CIA got into all sorts of difficulties. It was called a rogue elephant and this sort of thing, and, as a result, it was, if not almost destroyed, it certainly was diminished and damaged. Is that about to happen again? We seem to have one CIA difficulty now after another. Admiral?

ADM. STANSFIELD TURNER (former CIA director): I think it's almost inevitable it will happen if they don't call off this covert activity in Nicaragua because what's happening is they've been asked to do some things almost impossible to do by this technique. Therefore, the CIA people on the spot are frustrated, and they keep reaching for some new technique or device to get their job done well. What's happened? It's increasingly questionable types of activities they've turned to. The mining of the harbors: the public rejected that; they stopped. Now a manual that advocates assassination; that's against the president's own executive order; they have to stop that. If they keep going, they're going to stretch and stretch.

BRINKLEY: Does it advocate it or simply say how to do it, if you have decided on your own to do it?

WILLIAM E. COLBY (former CIA director): Neither. In

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fact, what it says, uses, is a single word 'neutralize,' which has all sorts of connotations to Americans, but in the context of the particular manual does not refer to assassination, and it does not mean assassination. 2,

SAM DONALDSON: What would you think neutralize might mean? COLBY: Neutralize is a general word which means take the person out of action. In Vietnam, it was used to either capturing them, getting them to accept an amnesty or in a fight having them killed.

SAM DONALDSON: Why not use those words then? Why not say... COLBY: They did in Vietnam, but in this context, this was a direction as to how you handle a town after a guerrilla group has taken it over. And one of the items says you have to neutralize the other leadership for the time being. It doesn't say to kill them. TURNER: I'd like to quote from the manual right here. Section 5, this is the heading for the section, 'Selective Use of Violence for Propagandistic Effects.' First sentence: 'It is possible to neutralize carefully selected, planned targets, such as judges.' I don't believe there's any way you can neutralize with violence without risking murder.

GEORGE WILL: But, Admiral, isn't there a kind of artificial clarity here to the distinctions we're trying to draw? That is, we're against, everyone says and the law says, at least an executive order says, we're against assassinations, yet the Contras are described frequently, and I suppose accurately, as freedom fighters resisting a tyranny. Freedom fighters resisting a tyranny are apt to kill the tyrant and the tyrant's agents. Now, where does this become a legitimate fight for freedom and where does it become an illegitimate use of assassination and is it possible to draw that line? TURNER: Yes, I think it's quite possible. We have warfare in which you kill combatants, and we have assassination in which you kill civilians and officials and others. And this clearly, in inciting violence against these people, talks about judges and other such officials.

WILL: But that is exactly the kind of line that guerrilla warfare blurs. Are you saying that guerrilla warfare is going to be exercised by our adversaries in the world, but we will not engage in or support guerrilla warfare?

TURNER: I think it is very clear from the people of the United States and from the Congress of the United States since 1976, when the revelations were brought out that David referred to earlier, that this country has a level of ethical procedure that it won't stoop below. We don't want to go to all the procedures that the communists use.

COLBY: I'm the first guy who wrote a directive against assassination. It was later picked up by the presidential

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directives. So, I'm against it, that's clear, but if
you'll look at this pamphlet in total context, what it's
doing is instructing a guerrilla movement that the
important aspect of the guerrilla movement is to capture
the loyalty of the population. And it specifically says
that one of the things that you say when you're talking to
the population is that you will not mistreat the enemies
of the people, the Sandinistas. That you will, even
though they may have committed crimes, you will not
mistreat them. Now, it's trying to give a guidance as to
how a guerrilla movement should conduct itself so that it
keeps its main focus where it should be, on the political
aspect, and the violence has a secondary part. In a war
you're going to have violence, but it's secondary to the
political objective.

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WILL: Before you wrote the memo forbidding
assassinations, you ran the Phoenix program in Vietnam.
COLBY: Right.

WILL: During which they neutralized, according to our own
figures, by 1969, 19,000 Viet Cong agents, including
killing 6,000 of them. COLBY: No, the figures are wrong.
We captured 28,000. Seventeen thousand took amnesty,
which was offered to them, and 20,000 were killed, mostly
in military action.

DONALDSON: I want to know how the CIA agency works when
it comes to the distribution and the printing of such a
handbook as the one that we've been talking about.
Someone had to pay for it--I guess that was agency funds--
and someone had to authorize it. Just where, is the
question. From your experience, where would this be
authorized? Would it go to the director? COLBY: It
might or might not. If it was clearly identified as an
assassination program, it would have gone to the director.
Since it was not, since the context of the brochure was
clearly a general directive on how to politicize a
guerrilla movement, then it might not have gone to him.
And the single word 'neutralize' in that sense and the
violence could have slipped by. The agency now says it
wishes it hadn't happened, but the military wishes they
hadn't spent \$15,000 for a coffeemaker, too. It's the
supervisory work of the Congress that will keep the agency
in line.

DONALDSON: Well, it did go to Langley. It did go to CIA
headquarters. It went to some level beyond their first
suggestion, it was a mere contract employee somewhere.
Admiral, where do you think it went? TURNER: I don't
think it went very high because, Sam, this is one
paragraph in a 42-page document. I doubt that it would
have gone all the way up to the director himself. But the
real question is, what instructions did the director and

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the White House give to the CIA for this whole operation?
And I would suggest to you that it's probably against the
law. 6.

DONALDSON: If I may, you know that officially, on the record, the administration has to deny that there is any such operation because you mentioned the law, the Boland Amendment, clearly it is against the law. TURNER: Well, it's a question of whether this manual advocates the overthrow of the government.

DONALDSON: I'm talking about the secret war to topple the Sandinistas. COLBY: I think the manual preceded the Congressional action that cut off the aid, so in that sense...

WILL: Let me come back a minute to this distinction. I gather we are aiding the freedom fighters in Afghanistan. It would be shocking if the freedom fighters in Afghanistan were not trying to kill Afghans who are collaborating with the Russian occupiers or Russian-occupying officials. Isn't that assassination, and should we be horrified? COLBY: I happen to support the idea of helping brave men fight for their country, and if that means guerrillas fighting an occupier or a hostile force, then I think we are proper...(everybody starts talking at once)

DONALDSON: ...brave men fighting for their country if they're on our side. You don't see the Nicaraguans and Sandinistas fighting for their country. COLBY: Whichever side, there are brave men on the other side fighting. A fight is usually brave men on both sides fighting.

DONALDSON: Then why do we call one freedom fighters and the other guerrillas?

WILL: Because one side's fighting for freedom.

BRINKLEY: I want to raise an ethical point. Admiral Turner was saying a minute ago that we have a level of ethics and decency below which we will not fall. OK, fine. We give weapons to fighters, guerrillas, Contras, whatever you care to call them, whose cause we sympathize with, in the full knowledge they're going to be used for killing. They have no other purpose. No one complains about that as an ethical matter, but then we write a little book telling them how to use these weapons and how to kill a few people and win their war, and suddenly that's a terrible scandal. Can you explain that to me? TURNER: Sure. The reason this particular covert activity in Nicaragua is in such deep trouble was predicted by the Church committee report in 1976. It said this kind of covert activity has never in the past been successful,

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unless it was in support of an agreed national policy.
This nation today is not agreed on what we should do about
Nicaragua. It is agreed, George, on what we should do
about Afghanistan, and therein lies the difference. That
we are willing as a nation to support this kind of
unethical activity in an Afghanistan because we know where
the country should go there. We don't know where we want
to go in Nicaragua, and we don't support it.

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BRINKLEY: Is it ethical, therefore, to give them guns?
TURNER: In Afghanistan?

BRINKLEY: No, in Nicaragua. TURNER: Yes, I believe it's
ethical to give them guns, but I think it's against the
law of this country to be supporting the overthrow of the
government of Nicaragua, and that's the way I read this
manual. And if you don't read the manual that way and are
more generous towards it, you have to at least admit that
people to whom we are giving it are certainly going to use
it to overthrow the government in Nicaragua, and that's at
least against the spirit of what the Congress has said it
wants the CIA to do. COLBY: If we give them guns, it
seems to me that it's quite logical to give them direction
as to how to conduct a guerrilla war most effectively, and
that means putting the major focus on the political
aspect. I happen to be very ambivalent about the aid to
the Contra program because I think that the main focus of
our effort in Central America should be to build the
strength in El Salvador, Honduras and the democratization
process in Guatemala, and that the Contra action probably
debilitates our overall support of that particular program
and that strategy. But, nonetheless, it has been approved
in the past. The House of Representatives has now
objected to it. Our aid to the Contras has stopped until,
unless the House removes that authorization next spring.

BRINKLEY: Well, thank you very much. Thank you Admiral
Turner, Mr. Colby. Thank you for coming. We enjoyed
hearing your views.

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AB07>NICARAGUA/CIA>BRINKLEY: We're back, and Sam is trying to get a question <
>MANUAL 3>in. Sam?

DONALDSON: Sen. Goldwater, should we have assassination
as part of a CIA plan under any circumstances? GOLDWATER:
No, I don't believe so. That's specifically prohibited,
uh, not just by laws that have been passed recently but
old laws that prohibit the CIA or any other member of our
intelligence family from attempting assassination.

DONALDSON: Would you agree then that the CIA ought not to
persuade others to engage in assassination? GOLDWATER:
I, I don't believe that under the operation of the United
States or any part of the operation of the United States

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that we should, under law, advocate anybody attempting assassination. That's up to the individuals who are trying to fight their way to freedom. If they want to assassinate, that's their business.

DONALDSON: Then why not use a word other than neutralize?

Why not say capture if that's what you mean? Why use a word that's open to the ambiguities of that word to an interpretation that's contrary to what you just expressed?

GOLDWATER: Well, I didn't write the book. If I wrote the book I might have used some other word. Neutralize is a very, very broad word. I've checked with all of my Spanish-speaking friends out here. I speak Spanish myself, and it has no different meaning in Spanish than it has in English. Uh, if it was going to raise all that kind of fuss, use another word.

DONALDSON: Sen. Moynihan, when they wrote the word, neutralize, whether it was copies or whether it was original, do you think the author meant to imply that perhaps assassination was all right, or do you think the author meant to say that the United States forbids it?

MOYNIHAN: Look, a little common sense here, the Army lesson plans that use the word removed, it speaks of having the populists gather and take part in the act. Now look, there's a rule that organizations in conflict become like one another, but I don't want us to become like the communists in what they will do. There are things Americans won't do, and I can't think that this has helped us one bit in advancing democratic principles in Central America. And Barry, I don't think you think so either. And in either event it is specifically prohibited by presidential executive order.

BRINKLEY: Well on this point, whoever was going on about this Socratic dialectic view, we might have expected to be able to choose his words carefully, wouldn't we?

MOYNIHAN: They chose the words carefully, they meant, they were talking about a practice technique, specific, formal technique of the Chinese Communists, when they were taking over China. Every time they came to a village they identified somebody as a landowner, an oppressor. They got everybody together in the town, village, and they formally shot him. That's what they're talking about.

DONALDSON: Sen. Moynihan, if I may change the subject slightly, President Reagan this past week endorsed the idea that Americans could go down and join in the Contras and fight with them, endorsed it to the extent of saying that he would not interfere with it, and as a matter of fact he thought there was a long tradition in this country of doing that type of thing. Do you agree? MOYNIHAN: Well, they better not bring arms with them, or they're in violation of American law. But if they do, I hope they

know what is awaiting them because it's a very casual thing to tell Americans to go down into those jungles. They are full of snakes and AK-47s.

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WILL: Sen. Moynihan, I want to come to a minute ago. You said there's some things American's won't do. Now this country two generations ago dropped an atomic weapon on civilian populations, created a firestorm deliberately, using incendiary bombs in Dresden and Hamburg. Now, having killed in the interest of getting rid of a tyranny and establishing democracy in Germany, which we did by doing this sort of thing. (sic) Now, why is it, I don't understand, why is it that it is suddenly us becoming like the other side, when we do kill our Sandinista officials one at a time instead of in job lots of 80,000 as we did killing innocent civilians during the second world war.

MOYNIHAN: George, we are describing here a technique of communist terror. It's called explicit and implicit terror, and no thanks. I think we can do our work in the open and be Americans and be democrats and don't have to apologize. Do you think we have helped democracy, whatever chance it has, of coming back to Nicaragua? I don't.

BRINKLEY: Let me ask a question on a slightly different but nevertheless related subject. Secretary of State Shultz this past week made a speech discussing the, discussing American retaliation against terrorists, those who blow up our embassies and so on. And he said the American people must understand there will be, when we do this, some loss of life among our servicemen and of innocent people. And he has, more or less I think, depending on what's happened in the last 10 minutes, been disowned by the Reagan administration, yes on one day and no on the next. I don't know where they stand. What do you think about the Shultz's speech? Sen. Goldwater, what do you think? GOLDWATER: Well, I think Secretary of State Shultz was absolutely right. If you're going to stamp our terrorism around this world and in this country, and we're only beginning to see it, we have to stamp out the people who practice this. Now, this is nothing new in this world. *Klauswitz wrote about terrorism and war a long, long time ago. We never dreamed we'd see terrorism in peace, but we're seeing it. And the only thing they understand is what they're practicing. If they want to stamp us out, we'd better stamp them out first. And if we lose somebody here and there, that's a lot better than losing tens of thousands of people.

BRINKLEY: Sen. Moynihan? MOYNIHAN: George Shultz is a deeply responsible man and not a casual one to call for killing even innocent persons. But you know if you're going to kill them, you'd better know who them is, and it's a very hard thing to do. And I would trust George

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Shultz to make the judgment. I wouldn't trust the people who put this manual out about Nicaragua to make that judgment.